

Title	Middle Bengali texts from Nepal : The Vidyāsundara story and Kṛṣṇa songs in a manuscript of the Malla dynasty (NGMPP No. B287/15)
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Citation	
Issue Date	2021-03-22
oaire:version	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/79111
rights	
Note	

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Middle Bengali texts from Nepal

The Vidyāsundara story and Kṛṣṇa songs in a manuscript of the Malla dynasty (NGMPP No. B287/15)

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Abbreviations

ŚKK = Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana by Barū Caṇḍīdās

MS = manuscript NGMPP No. B287/15

On my English

My English writing is not yet corrected by a native speaker. I deeply apologize for my mistakes the present articles might contain.

Introduction: Bengali texts from Nepal of the Malla period

It has been known that manuscripts of dramas written in the Bengali language are preserved in archives in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. However, this fact has not drawn much attention of Bengali scholars so far. Nor have they been much interested in the fact that Middle Bengali literature strongly influenced the rise of Nepalese literature

¹ I express my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Dr. Thibaut d’Hubert and Prof. Dr. Saymon Zakaria for their ungrudging help and collaboration. This research was subsidized by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Grants-aid Nos. JP25370412 and 17K02659.

and contributed to the formation of the local identity of the Nepalese² people, i.e. the Newaris who are a Tibeto-Burmese ethnic group. The course of events is as follows:

During the Malla dynasty which ruled the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, the kings ardently advanced cultural activities like literature and fine arts. Throughout this period, numerous plays were written and staged in dedication to the Malla kings. According to Brinkhaus (Brinkhaus 2003: 70), dramas were composed in the Bengali language in the second half of the 16th century or at the very beginning of the 17th century. At that time, Bengali was the literary court language of the Malla dynasty. Then, Bhaktapur king Jagajjyotirmalla (1614–1637) introduced Maithili as the new literary court language in place of Bengali, and this became the trend in the Malla courts onwards. Jagajjyotirmalla's grandson, king Jagatprakāśamalla, composed, besides Maithili dramas, several dramas in his mother tongue, the Newari language³. Afterwards, plays were composed in both Maithili and Newari⁴.

That means, the literature in Bengali, a New Indo-Aryan language which itself arose on the Eastern margin of the Subcontinent, served as a suitable model for the Newari

² In the historical context here, the term “Nepalese” precisely denotes the ethnic group Newari, native inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, whose mother tongue, Newari language, belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese linguistic group.

³ One underlying reason which, towards the end of his lifetime, brought him to compose more and more plays in Newari language seems to be the intensity of his personal grief over the death of his best friend, minister Candraśekhara Siṃha (Brinkhaus 1987: Brinkhaus 2003: 75). By adopting his mother tongue, he could best pour out his genuine sorrow in his writings. For some of his elegies composed in Newari, see Kitada (2020a).

However, Bhaktapur king Jagatprakāśa's Newari composition was not a single occurrence. There are several dramatic manuscripts composed in the Newari language by kings of other cities (Kāntipur and Pāṭan) around the same time. Obviously, it was then a new trend to compose plays in the Newari language. It would be a highly intriguing topic of another paper to observe and analyze the correlation and mutual influence between an individual's expression of its true feelings in its mother-tongue and the formation of the identity of the community in which this individual lives.

⁴ Of course, Sanskrit plays were also composed continually throughout the Malla period. However, I do not take the Sanskrit plays in my consideration, for I am here dealing with the process of rising of literature in local languages and of formation of identity of local communities which found their way of expression through adopting their own mother tongues.

people to express their local identity in their mother tongue, the Newari language, which is a non-Aryan language spoken in the mountainous region on the verge of the Subcontinent. In fact, from a wider perspective suggested by d’Hubert, this phenomenon in Kathmandu was a link belonging to the cultural chain of the vast area of Eastern Subcontinent, i.e. Nepal, Assam, Bengal and Orissa. In the courts of rulers in these regions, Middle Bengali, Maithili and Brajbuli played the role of lingua franca (d’Hubert 2018: 296⁵). Nepal and Arakan constituted the Western and Eastern extremities.

Unanticipated, however, is that the type of Bengali literature which served as a model for the Newaris seems to correspond to an earlier stage of development than what we today consider as Middle, or Classical Bengali literature. A fragment of a manuscript containing songs by Baṛu Caṇḍīdās (i.e. ŚKK⁶) and Vidyāpati was found from the National Archives of Nepal (Tamot & Kitada 2013; Kitada 2016; Kitada 2021a)⁷. Since this finding, I have come to confirm that some songs by Baṛu Caṇḍīdās were circulating among Nepalese dramatic manuscripts (Kitada 2019c). Other Bengali songs contained in these manuscripts often show similar features to Baṛu Caṇḍīdās’ songs.

Klaiman in the preface of her English translation of ŚKK mentions some scholars’ skepticism as to whether the time of Baṛu Caṇḍīdās’ composition of Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtan can really date back up to the 14th century (Klaiman 1984: 18ff.). Unfortunately, our findings in Nepal do not seem to offer much hints to the elucidation of this problem, for the above-mentioned fragment of ŚKK does not contain any mention of time of

⁵ See also the respective pages indicated in his Index under the entry word “Nepal”.

⁶ Klaiman’s introduction (Klaiman 1984) and Das (Das 1984) are recommendable surveys of the controversy on time of ŚKK.

⁷ Kitada (2021a) is the revised version of the two previous articles, and available online.

production, and the Bengali dramas containing these songs⁸ are all composed in the late 15th century or afterwards⁹. However, it is undeniable that Barū Caṇḍīdās¹⁰ and Vidyāpati were a favorite pair of poets for the Newari playwrights¹¹ of the Malla period.

The manuscript containing Bengali and Maithili songs

Among the Nepalese manuscripts microfilmed by NGMPP (Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project), a considerable number of manuscripts containing songs are not yet identified. One of them is the manuscript NGMPP No. B287/15 (= MS), which is simply given the title *rāga*, i.e. “[Anthology of] *rāga*-s, or melodies/tunes”. This manuscript contains Bengali and Maithili songs.

The microfilm of this manuscript consists of 7 exposures, containing 12 pages, i.e. assumably 10 folios¹². This manuscript drew my attention, because its style of script in a neat and clear handwriting resembled that of the manuscript containing ŚKK and Vidyāpati songs, which I studied earlier (Tamot & Kitada 2013; Kitada 2016; Kitada 2021a). As the result of my investigation, the first part of this manuscript is identified as a part from the Vidyāvinoda drama, i.e. a Bengali version of the Vidyā-Sundara story by the author Dvija Śrīdhara (see my argument at the end of the present article). The second part contains Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa songs in Bengali and Maithili. Among these songs, two mention the Maithili poet Vidyāpati in their *bhaṇitā*. Intriguingly, the Bengali

⁸ More precisely, the Bengali songs are noted in the margin of the manuscripts of these plays.

⁹ E.g. the play Kṛṣṇacaritra was composed under king Śivasimha (AD 1578-1620).

¹⁰ However, I have to admit that the possibility is not denied that the Bengali songs I could not identify might include compositions by other poets than Barū Caṇḍīdās.

¹¹ It is, however, a good question if the authors of these Bengali plays were Newaris or Bengali speaking poets. For the moment, I do not go into this troublesome matter.

¹² There is ambiguity as to the exact number of folios, as I am going to discuss below.

songs show similarities to Baṛu Caṇḍīdās' ones (i.e. ŚKK), although unfortunately, I was not successful in identifying any song, as I will discuss below in the present article.

First Part: Vidyā-Sundara legend

The first part (MS pp. 1–6) contains the same text as (i.e. a part of) the Vidyāvinoda manuscript (NGMPP B 276/16).¹³ In both manuscripts, even the numbering of songs¹⁴ (no. 47–60) is the same.

I give the Romanized text in the following.

In cases the letters are effaced due to damages or stains in the manuscript, I often managed to identify them only after consulting the corresponding parts in B276/16. Please note many of my reconstructions are thus influenced by B276/16. Readers are recommended to compare this version of text with my Romanized text of B276/16 published as Kitada (2019b).

Transliteration

(Page 1 = Fol. 1 rec¹⁵, l. 1)

[.....]saphala jivana morā nātha dari[śa]¹⁶ne, //

ja[ya]¹⁷2, e vola voliy[ā]¹⁸ [.....] da□i¹⁹□ prabhu □□□ñāma (l.2) [.....]

[kha]ne²⁰ //

¹³ I published its Romanized text online (Kitada 2019b).

¹⁴ Actually, this manuscript also contains a few passages from song no. 61, but its song number is lacking.

¹⁵ The upper left corner of this page is broken off.

¹⁶ An almost faded letter.

¹⁷ Stained.

¹⁸ The right half of the letter is effaced.

¹⁹ Only the *i-kāra* is visible.

²⁰ Cf. B276/16 *tatakhene*.

jaya2 madhuka ph[u]l[e]la mālā naiyā duyi hāthya tata-[khane]²¹ [di]ro [v]i[...] ²²
[.....]

[ja]ya2 ma[dh]uka [ph]u[ro] (1.3) [.....] hāthya tata-khane di[ro]²³ kumāra
vidyā-kero māthya //

jaya2 vidā²⁴[da] [v]ide[dh]²⁵[.....]ya pāya²⁶ [.....i]yā [p]i (1.4) [....vivāhe]
//48//

// rāga kvaḍā // tāla dvajamāna vādhā □²⁷ca t[ā]²⁸la //

āre, p[.....] [v]i□ā□i□i²⁹ ā[re] je saṃsā(1.5)[.....] rūpasi nā, e āre, torā mukha
dekhyā lāje kalamkita śaśi e e āre, 2 vi[c]ā³⁰ra madana taṃ[tre], e ā[re], vidyā [y]uvati³¹
(1.6) de[h]o sujāntre,

āre, torā duyi kucake, morā kara duya āmantre [n]ā e [ā]re [.....] //

na[.....i] su□³² sa mājhe nā e vi[dy]ā (1.7) vinodinī³³ [pr]āṇa hariyā nile lāje, e
[n]ava //

e,yā, nadana³⁴ vinode khāte [.....] tu[hma] □ laiya ā

(Page 2 = Fol. 1 ver³⁵, l. 1)

²¹ Almost faded.

²² Perhaps *vidyā*?

²³ It seems that the scribe first wrote *de*, thereafter added the variation of the *ā-kāra* sign on the right shoulder of the letter.

²⁴ A variation of *ā-kāra* set upon the horizontal line.

²⁵ Cf. B276/16 *vidigadha vidagadhā* (i.e. Skt. *vidagdhā*).

²⁶ Cf. B276/16 *puṇya pāya*.

²⁷ I cannot identify this letter.

²⁸ The *ā-kāra* is effaced.

²⁹ Cf. B276/16 *vidyā vidusi*.

³⁰ Or else, *i-kāra*.

³¹ In contrast to B276/16 *surati*.

³² Cf. B276/16 *surati sukha*.

³³ The name of the heroine of the story is Vidyāvinodinī. She is often referred to by the abbreviation Vidyā.

³⁴ Cf. B276/16 *madana*.

³⁵ The lower left corner of this page is broken off, and the part surrounding the damaged part is

[j]i [s]ya³⁶ kaṁdarppa pāte, ee āre, 2

tora mohana maṇi-lalāṭe, dekhyā sudamana muni□□ āre tora rūpa dekhyā cita padyā
gela tāte // (1.2) [49]³⁷ //

// śrī rāga // gaṇḍala ekatāla //

prāṇeśvara, kuca-j[u]ge dite hāthe □ā daha nakṣaro ghāta³⁸, sakhi tava³⁹ gatajāni haye,
(1.3)

he prāṇeśva[ra] āre, karite adhara-pāna, āre, daśana padero cihna, thuyā jāni ra⁴⁰ti
māyā-mohe, ,, //

[e] p[r]āṇeśvara // manohara nidhuva(1.4)[...]⁴¹ □ri□□[l]i āpane⁴², gupata rati keho jani
jāne,, prāṇeśvara //

kapola-yugala-citra, mṛga-mada-gandha-pattre⁴³, lopa jani jāya cuṁva[...]⁴⁴□ne, he
prāṇeśva[ra] //

gāthite mukutā-maṇi, sātela vichite jāyi, saghane nivida ālimgaṇe he prāṇeśvara, //

nivida □⁴⁵ deha (1.5) □i vāji[vo] kanaka kāci,, vājive sakala sakhi-jane, e prāṇeśvara,
//dhru//

tuhme to vinoda bhaṭa, akṣaya amṛta gha[ṭa]⁴⁶ (1.6) [.....]⁴⁷□ha dine dine //50//

stained.

³⁶ These two letters, being faded, are difficult to read.

³⁷ Badly blurred, but here should be the song number between 48 and 50.

³⁸ Cf. B276/16 *nā deho nakhero ghāta*.

³⁹ Or else, *teve*?

⁴⁰ The letter almost looks like *ce* or *ve*.

⁴¹ Here is a blank, but some letters seem to be effaced (see the next footnote).

⁴² Cf. B276/16 *nidhuvana kariha kerī āpane*.

⁴³ I.e. Skt. *gaṇḍa-patra*.

⁴⁴ One or two letters are lacking due to the damage of the page.

⁴⁵ Effaced. Cf. B276/16 *nivida na deha*.

⁴⁶ This letter is effaced but must rhyme with *bhaṭa*.

⁴⁷ Three or four letters are lacking due to the damage of the page.

// mallāla // dvajamāna //

āre, mukha⁴⁸ kalānidhi tuhmāre lo vidyā, āre, uthya mo

(Page 3= Fol. 2 rec, l. 1)

[.....]⁴⁹lo vidyā 2

hṛdaya kailā musārā lo vidyā, uthya mu haivo cakorā lo vidyā //, dhru//

āre, śṛṅgāra sāgara jala lo vidyā , (l.2) [.....]⁵⁰ā[ra]ha [mada]na anale lo vidyā , //51//

// śrī rāga // dvajamāna //

sakhi go, nava manobhava se rāja saṁbhava, āre, jehne [d]e(l.3)[.....]⁵¹ āpa[ne] □□□

moke adhika je kata ka⁵²malini, se vika⁵³ tora caraṇe, sakhi go 2

āji rajani-ta se nātha sahita, □u□i⁵⁴ (l.4) []⁵⁵ti□u□⁵⁶, [je] e,

jāyite āliṅgana na diro nātha-ke, se śāla lahilo mu-ke, //dhru//

sakhi go, ki vudhi⁵⁷ ke[ph]u āpane, je,he, (l.5) e, pāyilo mahānidhi, vi[dh]i-niyojita,

harāyilo nātha āpane, //dhru//

sakhi go, caturddaśa sāstra vadana vidite, kaṇṭhe avalaṁvi(l.6)ta-vāṇi,

sarvva-guṇa-nidhi, keli mahodadhi bhava-vikara⁵⁸ parāṇe //

sakhi go, keyūra kaṁkana ratana mudari⁵⁹, āro sātha saya⁶⁰ hāre, ka(l.7)ṛṇṇe to kuṇḍara

⁴⁸ Cf. B276/16 *sukha*.

⁴⁹ Damage of the upper left corner of the page.

⁵⁰ Damage of the page corner.

⁵¹ Damage of the page corner.

⁵² The letter *ka* here almost looks like *vā*, which seems to be the scribe's habit. Please note some of the letters which I have read as *vā* might be *ka*.

⁵³ Or else, *sevivo*?

⁵⁴ Half faded. Cf. B276/16 *bhujiro*.

⁵⁵ A blank space. It seems that three or four letters are effaced.

⁵⁶ Cf. B276/16 *rati sukha*.

⁵⁷ Or else, *du vi*?

⁵⁸ Or else, *bhevavikara*, i.e. Skt. *bhaivavi-kara*?

⁵⁹ < Skt. *mudrā* “a finger ring”.

⁶⁰ Perhaps **sāta saya* “seven hundred”?

sakhi hārāvati⁶¹, kādhi peraha ahmāke //52//

// śrī [rāga] // ekatāla //

ā go māyi vaḍa diga⁶² suni(Page 4 = Fol.2 ver, 1.1)lo dāduriro kehu na kahaya vidyā
ā[va]ta re more //53//

// rāga [vibhā]śa⁶³ // chutā⁶⁴ kariyā //

tile eka kahi ge(1.2)la juga sama bherā, na jāne kavana diga □ciyā gelā⁶⁵, kehu dekha[ta]
[le] kehu ā□□□ pri[ye] //

vahuta, jata□□□y[i]lo⁶⁶, a(1.3)mūla ratane hāthero māṇika mora hari niro kone, //54//

// rāga gu[ñja]li⁶⁷ // tāla [jati]⁶⁸ //

e [āro]⁶⁹ vidyā, dehe tora (1.4) □□□elo □se ālo vidyā, bhramara ṇa chāde tvara pāśa, ki
sundari vidyā, 2,

iha jānyā āyilu [sa□kā□] [ā]lo [v]i[dyā]⁷⁰ □(1.5) [.....]□itava dhāva cāru-hāse //dhru//

e ālo vidyā, tilā eka tyaracha nayāne, ālo vidyā, mukha-tulyā cāhalo [āpa.....] (1.6)

[.....] saṃpūrṇa śaśi[vase]⁷¹, vidyā, se kehne amṛta-pāna-varise //

vacana hi moke deho jīva dā[se]⁷² vidyā, de[kho] mo□ [s]aṃd[eha] j[i]□ (1.7) [...]

⁶¹ Hārāvati seems to be the name of Princess Vidyā's female servant.

⁶² It seems the scribe misread **caüdigā* ('the four directions'). The letters *ca u* resembles *va ḍa*.

⁶³ Almost illegible, being badly stained. My assumption is based on the *rāga* name *vibhāsa*.

⁶⁴ Written instead of mentioning the *tāla*. *Chutā*, which sometimes occurs in some of dramatic manuscripts from Kathmandu, seems to be a musicological term referring to rhythm.

⁶⁵ The scribe amended *bhelā* into *gelā*.

⁶⁶ Or else, *lā*.

⁶⁷ Badly stained. But the *rāga* name *guñjali* (< Skt. *guñjarī/gurjarī*) also occurs in the song no. 57.

⁶⁸ Almost faded off.

⁶⁹ Almost faded off.

⁷⁰ Almost faded off.

⁷¹ Almost illegible, being badly stained. Expected is a word rhyming with *varise*. Maybe it is better to read *sasi-rase* ("the juice/sap of the moon", i.e. *amṛta*).

[//55//]⁷³

// śrī rāga // chutā //

pīna, kathina, kuca, kanaka, katorā, //56//

(Page 5 = Fol. 3 rec, l. 1)

// [rāga] guñjali // [thaka]⁷⁴[t]āla, //

[...] ⁷⁵ dinakara kathā⁷⁶ kamalinī, kathā vase śaśadhara, kathā kumudinī, 2, /

kata dūra, r[o]va[ta] [gha]na, śikhara mayūra, utima (1.2) [.....] [ne]hā kapuna[h]i dūra

//[dhru]//

tuhme prabhu vada⁷⁷ nidāruṇi, tila eka nā diro je harāro ce[tane]⁷⁸ //57]⁷⁹//

//[rā]maka(1.3)[ri //]⁸⁰ athatāla //

vidyā, hema paṃkaja torā vadana vidite, madhu-lobhe bhamarero vyākula cite, //

kuhmara, na jāna [a....raṃga] (1.4) [...] parihare, kaṭākṣa guṇa tā indra-cāpā⁸¹ tasari, //

vidyā, parama-harise deha surati saṃbhoge, upasama ka[ra se] kusuma□□ (1.5) [...] //

kuhmara, tuhmāra surati-sukhe, padi gero bhāre, kuce[ro] kālimā □ta dhāki[vā] nicore //

vi[dyā] [tu]hmāra⁸² jauvane □(1.6)hita mora cita, garbha-saṃkā viśayana □⁸³ riha

⁷² Or else, *ne*?

⁷³ It is totally effaced. But the number 55 is here expected.

This song no. 55 is quoted also in the manuscript DPN 1386 of the Āśā Archives (see my argument at the end of this article).

⁷⁴ Almost effaced.

⁷⁵ The corner of manuscript is damaged.

⁷⁶ A corruption of *utkaṃṭha*?

⁷⁷ I.e. *baṛa*.

⁷⁸ Almost effaced.

⁷⁹ Almost effaced, but 57 is expected here.

⁸⁰ This part is lacking due to the damage of the page.

⁸¹ Or else, *indra-rāyā*?

bhaya-bhī[ta] //,

kuhmara □□□ā j□□□una prāṇeśvara, kuśalekhā [j]āya jani (1.7) tuhmāra śarīre, //

vidyā, tu laiā je saṁsā[r]e □□iro apane,, juga eka jiya □□u jarivo ekhane, //

kuhmara e [v]ola [...] ⁸⁴

(Page 6 = Fol. 3 ver, l. 1)

n[...]m[...]a □īdaya ro□□ ⁸⁵ [t]uhmāra a ⁸⁶[.....] ⁸⁷

// rāga □□āḍa ⁸⁸ // □□□□ ⁸⁹ //

[...] (1.2)vati pāna ph[u]la hā[.....] [rājāra jhī] //59// ⁹⁰

(Song no. 60 ⁹¹)

□□ [//] ekatāla //

⁸² Or else, *ahmāra*.

⁸³ Stained. Otherwise, this letter is cancelled by the scribe.

⁸⁴ The corner of manuscript is torn off.

⁸⁵ B276/16 *śuniyā mora hīdaya rodanā* is here vaguely recognizable.

⁸⁶ It is actually *ā*, according to B276/16 *āge*.

⁸⁷ Since the letters in this line are all very badly faded, my transcription is not free of speculation at all. This song seems to be the same as Song no. 58 of the Vidyāvinoda manuscript (B 276/16). There, the song runs as follows:

kumara, e vola śuniyā mora hīdaya rodanā, tuhmāra āge-te maro e mora vāsanā.

In fact, when using this version, the letters, which I have assumed as *navāmāra*, might be read as *evolāsuni* in revision. Likewise, the letters at the end of this line, which I could not identify at all, might be read as *emoravāśana*.

⁸⁸ It must be something like *mallāḍa*, according to B276/16 *mallāda*.

⁸⁹ Badly effaced. It seems to be *ekatāla*, according to B276/16 *eka*.

⁹⁰ Cf. B 276/16 *calila mālāvati pāna phula hāthe rājāra jhī e mora pāsanā*.

⁹¹ Many letters being effaced, Song no. 60 here is barely legible. I have no other way than to rely on the version of B 276/16:

// *mallāda* // *eka* //

śiva2 corero śrṅgāre garbha vidyāro e lahiro, hārāvati mālāvati sakhi e ā kariro, /

āra sana yāna dui milite na pāre, kārīmā padīro dui kucero śikhare //

śiva2 sakhi dui juguti kariyā kathāntare vidyāro mātā-ke giyā karilo gocare //

śiva2 putri-ke vadyā/cadiyā āse se rāja mahiṣi, sakrodha [ā]siyā se jhiyā-ke puchira se //

śiva2 ki kaila2 vidyā tuhme ku-nāśe, sava rājā vāpa-ke anāthi upahāse, //

śiva2 purusa-vidusi vidyā jagattrā vidite, athā[m]tare pādīriyā ghara ācuvite //60//

śiva2 c[o]ro [...] (1.3) garbha vidyāre e rahila, hār[ā][va]ti m[ā][va]ti sakhi e ā kaliro
[.....]

[...]i milite na pāre, kālim[ā] padire d[u](1.4)yi kuc[ero] śiore //

[.....]khi [d]uyi □□uti kariy[ā] [kathā]ntare, vidy[ā]□ [māt]ā-ke □iyā karilo gocare //

śiva2 □[tri]-ke va□[i](1.5)yā āse, se rāja [ma]hi□i, sakrodhe [ā]siyā se jhiyā-ke pucheve
se⁹² //

śiva2 ki kaila ki kaila vidyā tuhme kula-nāse⁹³, [sa]□ [rā]jā (1.6) [...]□-ke anā[th]i
□pa[...]

śiva2 [p]urusa-vidusi vidyā ja□□ vidite, athātare pādiliyā ghara ācuvite, //60// (1.7)

(Song no. 61⁹⁵)

[...]□□ī // □□[li] //

māvake volaṃti vidyā tu[hm]e [ja][nma]sth[ā]□ [...]ver sevā chādyā na jāno mu⁹⁶āna,
2 //

gaṇḍa paṇḍar[e?] d[e]h[ā] [...] (The page 6 ends)

Second part: Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa songs in Bengali and Maithili

Usually, an exposure contains two pages, i.e. facing pages. However, the exposure here

⁹² In B276/16, the scribe first wrote *puchavase*, then he amended it into *puchirase*, presumably on his own consideration of the context. Cf. Kitada (2019b: 36, fn. 458) on the passage in question.

⁹³ *Kula-nāse* “[someone who is] the destruction of the family.” The variant *kunāse* in B276/16 is obviously a mistake.

⁹⁴ The damage of the page.

⁹⁵ The first two verses of Song no. 61 in B276/16 is as follows:

// *rāga dhanāśī // cāli // māyya-ke volaṃti tuhme janma-sthāne, mahādever sevā chādyā na jāno suāna //2// gaṇḍa paṇḍare dehā candana-lepane, vāyu-roge hāyi uthya satya suvadane 2 //* (etc.)

⁹⁶ Mistake for *su*. The two letters look similar in form and are sometimes confounded.

(i.e. the fourth exposure of the microfilm) peculiarly contains only page 6 (= Fol. 3 ver). The next exposure (i.e. the fifth exposure) again contains two facing pages, i.e. the verso of a folio and the recto of the following folio. That means, a page (i.e. the recto of the folio) seems to be lacking. The NGMPP photographer seems to have omitted the recto of the folio, probably either because it was a blank page, or by mistake.

All of the remnant exposures (i.e. the fifth, sixth and seventh exposures) contain two facing pages respectively. This poses again a riddle as to which one is the last page, i.e. the verso of the last folio. Logically thinking, the exposure of the last page would have to contain only a page (i.e. the verso of the last folio). Peculiarly enough, however, this is not the case.

Thus, there is an obscurity in regard with the order of the folios. Hereafter, I adopt an expedient in numbering pages. I refer the facing pages contained in the next (i.e. fifth) exposure as Fol. 7 verso and Fol. 8 recto respectively.⁹⁷

(Page 7 = Fol. 7 verso)

Remark

This page is divided in two strips by a horizontal borderline. The upper strip (ca. 55%) of the page is completely blank, while the lower strip (ca. 45%) contains script: two lines, consisting of 9 letters and 7 letters (see my transliteration below); however, in the upper margin of the lower strip, i.e. along the borderline, a few small stains of ink are seen, which are obviously the remnants of a line of letters torn off. That means, the lower strip is a fragment of a page which once used to contain ca. seven lines like the

⁹⁷ I have given a much circumstantial explanation here, for the actual order of folios might be different: In other NGMPP microfilms, I have seen cases in which the photographer reversed his course of photographing in the middle of a manuscript, and again started taking pictures from the backside of the manuscript.

other pages of this manuscript. The reason why the upper strip is blank is unclear. Perhaps, two different strips of paper were patched together. It is also possible that in reality, it is a remnant of a folio whose upper part was torn off, and was photographed together with its previous blank folio.

Transliteration

(Page 7 = Fol. 7 verso, l. 1)⁹⁸

the nahi jivana vi nāri⁹⁹ ,// ॐ¹⁰⁰ //

(1.2) ॐ¹⁰¹ □¹⁰² śrī rāma re ॐ rāga

(Page 8 = Fol. 8 recto)

(1.1) ॐ rāga korāva // ekatāla //

vande nanda-tanaye pada-pallava ve¹⁰³ lasa[pta?]□[ṭa?]vala-rāje /

ghāghara nopura runujhu[nu] (1.2) vāje, vāje kiṃkiṇe¹⁰⁴ sāne, //

// māru // jati //

mo-ko jāna de ma□¹⁰⁵[p]uri¹⁰⁶ ko kahnāyā uci□¹⁰⁷jama□(1.3)ta lekhi tuha leha //dhru//

avudha¹⁰⁸ gopa tuha kichu nahi jñāna, athe [a]gumāve [da]dhi dudha dāna //

⁹⁸ The three segments contained in this page are each written by different scribes.

⁹⁹ *Jivana vi nāri* would mean “I can’t even live.”

¹⁰⁰ A fleuron, or a decorative sign indicating the end of a text.

¹⁰¹ A sign indicating the beginning of a song.

¹⁰² Maybe *om*?

¹⁰³ The optional form of *e-kāra* set to the left of a letter. Or else, *vi*?

¹⁰⁴ Similar wording is found in ŠKK no. 308 (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 377): *cañcala nūpura ghana kiṅkinībāje*. However, solely this instance, rather being a customary expression, would not be sufficient for saying anything about parallelism.

¹⁰⁵ It must be *dhu* of **madhupuri*.

¹⁰⁶ **Moko jāna de madhupuri* would be Rādhā’s entreaty.

¹⁰⁷ Maybe *ā*?

ka¹⁰⁹hadi(1.4)□ni iha śuna govāli, gopa nehā ya□[bhu?] deva murāri // ° //

māruvā // ekatā□i¹¹⁰ [//]

□dhivyaci□ā¹¹¹(1.5)[...]na jāke [math]urāpuri, kāhnu sa [ne ?] padava vivāda,

kaṭu mero tale morā pasāra lutil[ā]¹¹², [ja?][j?]iro □ini, (1.6)

[...] ¹¹³□ila jāda visa vidhariyā mātha sāsuri¹¹⁴ dha[r]imo hātha,

āju vahure jāyivo [hā]□¹¹⁵, / adha¹¹⁶nevape, (1.7) [...] ¹¹⁷na suni guru vacane,

te kāhnu □□[m¹¹⁸]ilo vāta¹¹⁹ // ° //

rāga // ¹²⁰palatāla //

cañcara□¹²¹ chodu go¹²²(Page 9 = Fol.8ver, 1.1) [.....] ¹²³□ri¹²⁴, rati nā jāno hāme na vi

nāri¹²⁵ //

¹⁰⁸ Similar wording in ŚKK no. 164 (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 291): *ābudha goālinī nā bujhasi kāja*. However, solely this instance, rather being a customary expression, would not be sufficient for saying anything about parallelism.

¹⁰⁹ Or else *ja*?

¹¹⁰ *ekatāli*?

¹¹¹ Maybe *vā*?

¹¹² Cf. ŚKK no. 31 (Fol. 14/1) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 217): *lurīā saba pasāra*.

¹¹³ Damage of the page.

¹¹⁴ E.g. ŚKK no. 91 (Fol. 43/1) mentions the looting of the goods for sale (*pasāra*) and the mother-in-law (*śāśuri*): *ghṛta dudha naṭha mora sakala pasāra / sāsuri nananda mora āti durubāra* //3//

¹¹⁵ Perhaps *hātha*?

¹¹⁶ Or else, *va*? Or, *pa* of **apane*?

¹¹⁷ Damage of the page.

¹¹⁸ Or else, *l*?

¹¹⁹ If it is **bāṭa*, expected would be some statement similar to ŚKK no. 102 (Fol. 48/2) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 258): *khāṇieka chāriā kāhnāñi mode deha bāṭa*.

¹²⁰ The name of *rāga* is left blank.

¹²¹ *tva*, *sva*, *tva* etc.?

¹²² Perhaps the first syllable of **gopāla*?

¹²³ Damage of the page.

¹²⁴ Perhaps the last syllable of **murāri* in rhyme with *nāri*.

¹²⁵ See my argument at the end of the present article.

ehi patha chāḍi deha nandakī, dhotā, heri gopi sava kaha (1.2) [.....]¹²⁶ // ° //

simdhūrā // jati //

kanaka kamala¹²⁷ dala tuva mukha maṇḍala, khañjana jugala uthi cale¹²⁸,

hama va(1.3)[...] ¹²⁹bhāgiyā rāja pada na pāyila khaṇḍe nahi virahero jare¹³⁰, /

hari² piyāse rahala heri, dare nahi □o, (1.4) [...] ¹³¹□o¹³²ramire //

cikura cāmara veni jene kāra sāpini¹³³, sundari hṛdaya bhara sāje

gime gaja-mati-hāra¹³⁴ je (1.5) jehne surasaridhāne, vahaya kanayāgiri mājhe // ° //

rāga bhupālī // jati //

adhika maṇṭhara gamaṇa tora de(1.6)ṣi dukha mana haya vaḍa mola, //

sava sakhi tyaji, anala tohi jāya nikuñja, sambhākhaha¹³⁵ mohi //

cala (Page 10 = Fol. 9 rec, 1.1) cala sakhi turita tāhā tora sakhi puṇa bhetana jāhā

//dhru//

kare [dha]raha vīse gopi lera, hāsiyā gopi(1.2)ṇi utara dela //

kavi vidyāpati¹³⁶ kahaya sāra, erasa vindaka [na]nda kumāla //

rāga korāva // pala(1.3)□ālī¹³⁷ //

¹²⁶ Damage of the page.

¹²⁷ Cf. ŚKK no. 13 (Fol. 7/1) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 207): *kanaka-kamala-ruci bimala badane*.

¹²⁸ ŚKK no. 61 (Fol. 29/1) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 236): *khañjana jiṇiā tora nayana-yugala*.

¹²⁹ Damage of the page.

¹³⁰ I.e. < *jvare*. Cf. ŚKK no. 22 (Fol. 10/2) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 211): *viraha jarē tehē jarilā*.

¹³¹ Damage of the page.

¹³² Or else, □ā?

¹³³ Description of hairs black like black serpents (*kāla sāpinī*).

¹³⁴ < Skt. *gaja-mukta-hāra*.

¹³⁵ < *sambhāṣa*-.

¹³⁶ Vidyāpati is mentioned as the author in the *bhaṇitā*.

¹³⁷ I.e. *palatālī*.

gorā vādhā ro¹³⁸ tume vaḍāre jhi¹³⁹, nitera ācala diyā [gv ?]api le ki //
saruva kaṁkāli khani, ho(1.4)liche vāṣe¹⁴⁰, kucera bhare jani bhāgiyā jāyī¹⁴¹ //
vaṁdhu kāhnāyā lo tuhme añcala choḍa, svāmi duruvā¹⁴²(1.5)[...] ¹⁴³vadasi mora //
sodara bhāginā¹⁴⁴ tumāla nahi lāja, rūpa vināyā tumāla vivā kāja¹⁴⁵ // ° // (1.6)

[.....]¹⁴⁶va¹⁴⁷ // ekatāla //

tumāla madhura vacana sundari lo hṛdaya lāgiyā āche mora, hāra heno,

(Page 11 = Fol.9 ver, 1.1)

[.....]¹⁴⁸□ra, hṛdaya upara dhari, syāmā sundara tanu tora // ° //¹⁴⁹

kahnala // jati //

ciṭṭa tohari¹⁵⁰ nayāna (1.2) [...] ¹⁵¹ □ta □□□va dukha parāna //

jivana, jauvana na rahe sāra, viraha samudre karaha pāra //

sunaha □u(1.3)[...][ri?] □□o sarūpa nava tanuni madhya tohari rūpa¹⁵² //

kanayaka tora karaha dhāna, bhujete □iyā deho adhare (1.4) □āna //

¹³⁸ Perhaps a corruption of **rādhā lo*. **Gorā rādhā lo* would mean: “Oh, fair-skinned Rādhā!”

¹³⁹ Cf. *baṛāra jhi* “aunt’s daughter” in ŚKK no. 97 (Fol. 46/1) (Bhaṭṭācārya 2011: 255); no. 48, v. 6 (Fol. 23/2).

¹⁴⁰ Perhaps **rākhe*?

¹⁴¹ Here seems to be some simile like an object (*ācala* “a mountain”?) which is comparable to the woman’s breast, feeling humiliated by the extreme beauty of Rādhā’s breasts, flees away (*bhāgiyā jāyī*) from her.

¹⁴² I.e. *duruvāra*.

¹⁴³ Damage of the page.

¹⁴⁴ *Sodara bhāginā* “the son of a sister born of the same womb (i.e. mother)”. “[You are] the son of my sister born by the same mother. Don’t you have any shame?”

Cf. ŚKK no. 54 (Fol. 25/2): *sodara bhāginā hoḥ hena tora kāja /1/ kāhnāññ lāja nāññ tore*.

¹⁴⁵ Obviously, it is a corruption of *ki vā kāja*.

¹⁴⁶ Damage of the page.

¹⁴⁷ The last syllable of a *rāga* name, maybe of *korāva*.

¹⁴⁸ Damage of the page.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. ŚKK 239, 1.1 (Fol. 125/1): *tohmāra bacana kāhnāññ dhariññ mañe*.

¹⁵⁰ *Tohari* “your”, occurring twice in this song, seems to be Maithili.

¹⁵¹ Damage of the page.

¹⁵² In rhyme with *sarūpa*.

dhara¹⁵³ manoratha je kare siddhi, tāke sura-pure milayā nidhi // ◦ //

kahnala // ekatāli //

sājhake (1.5) [v?]eri ugalanavasasadhana dharani vidita sava kāhnu //

tolā kuṇḍala cakra dekhitalāse lukāvala hera(1.6)yite durabhara rāhu¹⁵⁴ //

dhanivaitharire vadane to hātha cadhāyi,

tu[vā?] mukha candri [sa?] adhika capala bhela kata, ((Page 12 = Fol. 10 rec, 1.1) cita

dhara calo bhāyi // ◦ //

rāga bhupāli // ekatāli //

kara-tare [mora] sobhe mukha candra kisaraya milu (1.2) janu nava aravindre //

anukhane nayāne galaya jala-dhāra, khañjana gilaya ugaya [muti]-hāra //

o gya(1.3)[l]āni nipalati nihāra, aruṇa picaya cāhe aṁdhākāra //

viralā nakṣatra nava maṇḍala bhāsa, a(1.4)□[v?]ute□[ṣu?]koki mukha-hāsa //

kuṭila kākṣa, phuvala aravinda, bhokṣila bhamala pivaya maka(1.5)[ra]¹⁵⁵nda //

[san ?]ini māna manika dhana tola, corāvaya āva lo, anucita mora □□ aparādha mā□u

(1.6)

[.....ā]na, dhani dhara hari kari [r]ākha¹⁵⁶ parāna //

bhanayi vidyāpati¹⁵⁷, ehu rasa jāna, rāya śiva¹⁵⁸,

(End of the manuscript)

¹⁵³ Or else, *vara*?

¹⁵⁴ Peculiar rhyming with *kāhnu*.

¹⁵⁵ This letter is lacking due to the damage of the page, but it is obviously *makaranda*.

¹⁵⁶ It almost looks like *cākha*. The letter *ra* sometimes resembles *ca*.

¹⁵⁷ Vidyāpati is mentioned as author in the *bhaṇitā*.

¹⁵⁸ Obviously, a part of the name of king Śivasimha, the patron of Vidyāpati. The *bhaṇitā* verse is broken off here.

Analysis

In the second part of the manuscript, two songs (MS p. 9, ll. 5ff, *rāga bhupāli jati*; MS p. 12, ll. 1ff, *rāga bhupāli ekatāli*) mention Vidyāpati as author in their *bhaṇitā*. Besides, at least one song (MS p. 11, l. 4ff) is in Maithili.

I could not find any parallel of ŚKK, although my original expectation to investigate this manuscript was to find some. In some songs, I recognized wordings reminding me of ŚKK, but these are no conclusive evidences. I only pointed out such wordings in footnotes.

In one song (MS p. 10, ll. 2ff, *rāga korāva palatāli*), Rādhā is addressed as *vaḍāre jhi* (Bengali *barār jhi*) “daughter of Grandma (*barāyī*)”. Grandma (*barāyī*) is an important character functioning as a go-between of the lovers, typical to ŚKK. However, this would not be sufficient for a conclusive evidence, either.

Although being very fragmental, the following two phrases are of interest, in association with the manuscript (DPN 1386) in the Āśā Archives, Kathmandu¹⁵⁹ which contains Bengali and Maithili songs, under which one song is identified as a ŚKK verse.

The two phrases in question are:

the nahi jivana vi nāri (MS p. 7)

hāme na vi nāri (MS p. 9, l. 1)

¹⁵⁹ Digital Project Number (DPN) 1386. This manuscript contains a play in the Newari language, Padmasāgara-pyākhā, and other songs composed in Bengali, Maithili and Newari.

Please compare *the nahi jivana vi nāri* with the phrase at the end (underlined) of the following song contained in the Āśā-Archives manuscript DPN 1386 (from exposure 2b, l. 5 to exposure 3a, l. 2)¹⁶⁰.

// varāri // pra //

hāthe na dharaha kāhnu kāpaya tanu mora, purake purala tanu na kariha kora, //

ghāmara sava tanu tuva bhaya rāgī, jio nahi uvara kavana upāya //

na kara2 hatha mugudha murāri, chayiraka hātha na jivaya na vi nāri //

If based on the comparison, our fragment *the nahi jivana vi nāri* was, perhaps, originally *hāthe nahi jivana vi nāri*.

As to the second *hāme na vi nāri*, the same phrase (underlined) is contained in DPN 1386 (from exposure 3a, l. 2 to exposure 3b, 3)¹⁶¹. That is a totally different song, but *hāme na vi nāri* seems to be a kind of *topos*.

Our manuscript NGMPP No. B287/15

rāga // palatāla //

cañcara□ chodu go [.....] □ri, rati nā jāno hāme na vi nāri //

ehi patha chāḍi deha nandakī, dhotā, heri gopi sava kaha [.....] //

Āśā-Archives manuscript DPN 1386

// savari // e //

¹⁶⁰ The Romanized text is quoted from Kitada (2019c: 4f).

¹⁶¹ The Romanized text is quoted from Kitada (2019c: 4f).

hame na vi nāli madhāyi, āre, kare dhari tahni piyā puchara hu vātare //

vujha ramaya tuva caturāyi, ārati pala-dhana kavahu na pāyive //

sunā nātha vinati hamāra, hame mārati tohe bhuṣara bhamarā //

mādhava na kara vivāde, pāriyā bhujaha rati ketuka sāra //

hamara nāgara sama ture, mukurita kusuma bhamara nahi bhure //

nṛpa vaidenātha kaha bhāvi, vārārama nikata punamatapāvi //

Unfortunately, my lack of knowledge does not allow me to say anything further about its textual background¹⁶².

Vidyāvinoda, the Bengali version of Vidyā-Sundara by poet Dvija Śrīdhara

Intriguingly, this Āśā-Archives manuscript (DPN 1386, exposure 1) contains song no. 55 of the Vidyāvinoda which is included in the first part of our manuscript NGMPP B287/15. I quote that version below¹⁶³.

vāse,ro he āro vidyā, bhramara na chāde tora pāse rāki āro vidyā //

āre, te kārane āyaro tora pā[sero] he [ā]ro vidyā, vinodha vadhāo cāru hāse, ro he, āro vidyā //

āre tira eka teracha nayāne ro he, āro [v]i[dy]ā, mu[]tu[n]i cāho ta amāke roki āro vidyā//

At the time when I published my Romanized text with a brief analysis (Kitada 2019b), I

¹⁶² The index of Basantarañjan Rāy's ŚKK edition (Rāy [1385]) registers *nāri* in meaning of "I can't". However, none of the instances indicated corresponds either of the two phrases in question. On the other hand, Rāy's index does not seem to be exhaustive.

¹⁶³ Quoted from Kitada (2019c: 6).

did not know historical background about its author Dvija Śrīdhara. Thanks to my colleague Prof. Dr. Thibaut d’Hubert’s precious suggestion, it turned out that this is nothing else than Śrīdhara who was the court poet under the patronage of the king of Gaurī, Fīrōz Šāh (AD 1532-33), son of king Nuṣrat Šāh (1519-32)¹⁶⁴. In fact, Śrīdhara’s version was the earliest Bengali version of Vidyā-Sundara story.¹⁶⁵

Intriguingly, the Vidyā-Sundara story still belongs to the repertory of the Kārtik Nāc theater of Pharping village on the southern margin of the Kathmandu Valley¹⁶⁶.

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¹⁶⁴ In the Vidyāvinoda drama, Nuṣrat is referred to as *nasira*. Sultān Nuṣrat Šāh invaded Arakan.

¹⁶⁵ Only after completing the present article, I published analyses on this matter (Kitada 2021b; 2021c).

¹⁶⁶ Information given in an interview with Mr. Dharmarāj Balāmī, the director of the Kārtik Nāc theater festival in Pharping. On the Kārtik Nāc of Pharping, see Kitada (2020b). However, the scripts of the plays in themselves are rewritten in each year of presentation.

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¹⁶⁷ In the PDF (in p.1, under the title), I falsely given 2020 January as the year of publication, but the correct one is 2021 January, as indicated as “issue date” in the referential description of OUKA.